

IN THE CLAIMS

1. (currently amended) A system for insertion of a cervical disc replacement device, comprising:

a cervical disc replacement device having first and second members;

an insertion handle comprising a shaft having a proximal end, a distal end, a longitudinal bore extending from the proximal end toward the distal end, and an actuator disposed substantially at the proximal end of the shaft and an engagement member disposed at the distal end of the shaft;

an insertion plate connected with and that maintains the first and second members of an the intervertebral disc replacement device in registration with one another for substantially simultaneous insertion into an intervertebral disc space of a spinal column, the insertion plate operable for detachable engagement with the insertion handle; and

a pushing member having a proximal end and a distal end and being slideably receivable within the longitudinal bore.

2. (previously presented) The system for insertion of a cervical disc replacement device of claim 1, wherein the shaft is operable to permit the first and second members of the intervertebral disc replacement device to be at least one of inserted into and moved within the intervertebral disc space without substantially changing their orientation with respect to one another.

3. (previously presented) The system for insertion of a cervical disc replacement device of claim 1, wherein the insertion handle is detachable from the insertion plate to facilitate removal of the insertion handle when the intervertebral disc replacement device is positioned within the intervertebral disc space.

4. (previously presented) The system for insertion of a cervical disc replacement device of claim 3, wherein: the insertion plate includes a base having a posteriorly directed surface directed toward the first and second members of the intervertebral disc replacement device, a spaced apart anteriorly directed surface, and an insertion member extending away from the anteriorly directed surface of the base; and one of the insertion member of the base and the engagement member of the shaft includes a stem, and the other of the insertion member of the base and the engagement member of the shaft includes a bore such that the stem is receivable in the bore and the insertion handle and the insertion plate detachably engage one another.

5. (previously presented) The system for insertion of a cervical disc replacement device of claim 4, wherein at least one of: the stem and the bore are sized and shaped for achieving frictional engagement; and at least one of the stem and the bore include tapered surfaces to achieve the frictional engagement.

6. (previously presented) The system for insertion of a cervical disc replacement device of claim 4, further comprising an anti-rotational mechanism disposed at at least one of the distal end of the shaft and the stem, the anti-rotational mechanism resisting rotation of the stem within the bore and thereby assisting maintenance of the relative positions of the insertion handle and the intervertebral disc replacement device when they are engaged.

7. (previously presented) The system for insertion of a cervical disc replacement device of claim 6, wherein the anti-rotational mechanism includes at least one key element disposed

on one of the stem and the bore, and at least one slot element disposed on the other of the stem and the bore, the at least one key element and the at least one slot element engaging one another when the stem is disposed in the bore in order to resist rotation of the stem within the bore.

8. (previously presented) The system for insertion of a cervical disc replacement device of claim 7, wherein: the bore is disposed longitudinally within, and terminates at, the distal end of the shaft; and at least two key elements are disposed at the distal end of the shaft and communicate with the bore such that a diameter of the bore terminating at the distal end of the shaft elastically increases as the stem is urged into the bore to facilitate frictional engagement between the stem and the shaft.

9. (previously presented) The system for insertion of a cervical disc replacement device of claim 1 wherein the actuator is operable to cause the shaft and the insertion plate to disengage from one another.

10. (previously presented) The system for insertion of a cervical disc replacement device of claim 9 wherein actuation of the proximal end of the pushing member causes the distal end thereof to engage the insertion plate and separate the shaft from the insertion plate.

11. (previously presented) The system for insertion of a cervical disc replacement device of claim 10, wherein: the insertion plate includes a base having a posteriorly directed surface directed toward the first and second members of the intervertebral disc replacement device, a spaced apart anteriorly directed surface, and an insertion member extending

away from the anteriorly directed surface of the base; the insertion member of the base includes a stem and the engagement member of the shaft includes a bore such that the stem is receivable in the bore to engage the insertion handle and the insertion plate with one another; and actuation of the proximal end of the pushing member causes the distal end thereof to engage the stem of the insertion plate and separate the shaft from the insertion plate.

12. (previously presented) The system for insertion of a cervical disc replacement device of claim 10, wherein: the proximal end of the shaft includes at least one first flange and the proximal end of the pushing member includes at least one second flange; and respective forces applied to the first and second flanges facilitates slideable actuation of the pushing member within the longitudinal bore and engagement of the distal end of the pushing member with the stem of the insertion plate to separate the insertion handle from the insertion plate.

13. (previously presented) The system for insertion of a cervical disc replacement device of claim 12, wherein the urging of the first and second flanges towards one another results in the respective forces to cause the insertion handle and the insertion plate to separate from one another.

Claims 14-19 (canceled)

20. (currently amended) A system ~~for insertion of a cervical disc replacement device,~~ comprising:
a cervical disc replacement device having first and second members;

an insertion handle having a shaft having a proximal end, a distal end, and a longitudinal bore extending from the proximal

end toward the distal end, and an engagement member disposed at the distal end of the shaft; and

an insertion plate having a base having a posteriorly directed surface directed toward the first and second members of the intervertebral disc replacement device, a spaced apart anteriorly directed surface, and an insertion member extending away from the anteriorly directed surface of the base, the insertion plate connected with and capable of maintaining first and second members of an intervertebral disc replacement device in registration with one another for substantially simultaneous insertion into an intervertebral disc space of a spinal column, the insertion plate operable for detachable engagement with the insertion handle.

21. (currently amended) A system ~~for insertion of a cervical disc replacement device,~~ comprising:
a cervical disc replacement device having first and second members;

an insertion handle comprising a shaft having a proximal end, a distal end, a longitudinal bore extending from the proximal end toward the distal end, and an actuator disposed substantially at the proximal end of the shaft and an engagement member disposed at the distal end of the shaft;

an insertion plate having a base having a posteriorly directed surface directed toward the first and second members of the intervertebral disc replacement device, a spaced apart anteriorly directed surface, and an insertion member extending away from the anteriorly directed surface of the base, the insertion plate connected with and capable of maintaining first and second members of an intervertebral disc replacement device in registration with one another for substantially simultaneous insertion into an intervertebral disc space of a spinal column,

the insertion plate operable for detachable engagement with the insertion handle; and

a pushing member having a proximal end and a distal end and being slideably receivable within the longitudinal bore.